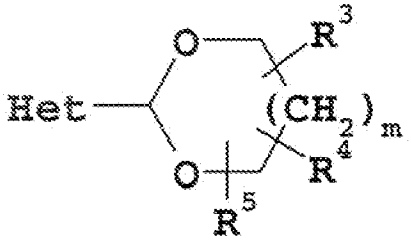
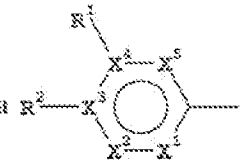
CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:-

Het is a five or six membered heteroaromatic ring of the formula  in which

one of R^1 and R^2 is optionally substituted heteroaryl and the other is optionally substituted heteroaryl or optionally substituted aryl; wherein heteroaryl is selected from: optionally substituted benzimidazolyl, furyl, imidazolyl, isoxazolyl, isoquinolinyl, isothiazolyl, oxadiazolyl, pyrazinyl, pyridazinyl, pyrazolyl, pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrrolyl, quinazolinyl, quinolinyl, 1,3,4-thiadiazolyl, thiazolyl, thienyl and triazolyl groups; and heteroaryl optional substitution is with one or more substituents selected from: acyl, acylamino, alkoxycarbonyl, alkylenedioxy, aroyl, aroylamino, aryl, arylalkyloxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carboxy, cyano, halo, heteroaroyl, heteroaryl, heteroaroylamino, hydroxy, nitro, trifluoromethyl, $R^{11}Z^2$-, Y^1Y^2N-, Y^1Y^2N-CO-, $Y^1Y^2NSO_2$-, alkylSO_2-Y^1N- or alkyl optionally substituted with aryl, heteroaryl, hydroxy, oxo, -CO_2R^7, -$CONY^3Y^4$ or -NY^1Y^2; wherein aryl is selected from: phenyl and naphthyl; and aryl optional substitution is with one or more subtituents selected from: acyl, acylamino, alkoxy, alkoxycarbonyl, alkylenedioxy, alkylsulphinyl, alkylsulphonyl, alkylthio, aroyl, aroylamino, aryl, arylalkyloxy, arylalkyloxycarbonyl, arylalkylthio, aryloxy, aryloxycarbonyl, arylsulphinyl, arylsulphonyl, arylthio, carboxy, cyano, halo, heteroaroyl, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyloxy, heteroaroylamino, heteroaryloxy, hydroxy, nitro, trifluoromethyl, Y^3Y^4N-, Y^3Y^4NCO-, $Y^3Y^4NSO_2$-, Y^3Y^4N-C_{2-6}alkylene-Z^1- (where Z^1 is O, NR^5 or $S(O)_n$), alkylC(=O)-Y^3N-, alkylSO_2-Y^3N- or alkyl optionally substituted with aryl, heteroaryl, hydroxy, or Y^3Y^4N-;

X^1 is a bond, X^3 and X^4 are each independently N or C and X^2 and X^5 are independently CH, N, NH, O or S; or X^3 and X^4 are C, one of X^1, X^2 and X^5 is N and the others are N or CH; but

excluding compounds in which X^1 is a bond, one of X^2 and X^5 is N and the other is NH and X^3 and X^4 are both C;

R^3 represents a group $-L^1-R^6$;

R^4 represents hydrogen, alkyl or hydroxyalkyl; or

R^3 and R^4, when attached to the same carbon atom, may form with the said carbon atom a cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl or heterocycloalkyl ring or a group $C=CH_2$;

R^5 represents hydrogen or alkyl;

R^6 is hydrogen, alkyl, azido, hydroxy, alkoxy, aryl, arylalkyloxy, aryloxy, carboxy, an acid bioisostere selected from the group consisting of C(=O) NHOH, $-C(=O)-CH_2OH$, $-C(=O)-CH_2SH$, C(=O) NH-CN, sulpho, phosphono, alkylsulphonylcarbamoyl, tetrazolyl, arylsulphonylcarbamoyl, heteroarylsulphonylcarbamoyl, N methoxycarbamoyl, 3 hydroxy-3-cyclobutene-1,2-dione, 3,5-dioxo-1,2,4-oxadiazolidinyl, 3 hydroxyisoxazolyl and 3 hydoxy 1 methylpyrazolyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkyloxy, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyloxy, heteroaryloxy, heterocycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyloxy, nitro, $-NY^1Y^2$, $-N(R^7)-C(=Z)-R^8$, $-N(R^7)-C(=Z)-L^2-R^9$, $-NH-C(=Z)-NH-R^8$, $-NH-C(=Z)-NH-L^2-R^9$, $-N(R^7)-SO_2-R^8$, $-N(R^7)-SO_2-L^2-R^9$, $-S(O)_nR^{10}$, $-C(=Z)-NY^1Y^2$ or $-C(=Z)-OR^{10}$;

R^7 is hydrogen, alkyl, aryl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyl, or heterocycloalkyl;

R^8 is alkyl, alkoxy, aryl, arylalkyloxy, cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyloxy or heterocycloalkyl;

R^9 is alkoxy, aryl, arylalkyloxy, arylalkyloxycarbonylamino, carboxy, an acid bioisostere selected from the group consisting of C(=O) NHOH, $-C(=O)-CH_2OH$, $-C(=O)-CH_2SH$, C(=O) NH-CN, sulpho, phosphono, alkylsulphonylcarbamoyl, tetrazolyl, arylsulphonylcarbamoyl, heteroarylsulphonylcarbamoyl, N methoxycarbamoyl, 3 hydroxy-3-cyclobutene-1,2-dione, 3,5-dioxo-1,2,4-oxadiazolidinyl, 3 hydroxyisoxazolyl and 3 hydoxy 1 methylpyrazolyl, cycloalkyl, cyano, halo, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkoxy, heterocycloalkyl, hydroxy or $-NY^3Y^4$;

R^{10} is alkyl, aryl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyl, or heterocycloalkyl;

L^1 represents a direct bond or a straight- or branched-chain alkylene linkage containing from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and optionally substituted by halogen, hydroxy, alkoxy or oxo;

L^2 is a straight- or branched-chain alkylene linkage containing from 1 to 6 carbon atoms;

Y^1 and Y^2 are independently hydrogen, alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl, cycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyl, heteroaryl or alkyl optionally substituted by alkoxy, aryl, cyano, cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heterocycloalkyl, hydroxy, oxo, $-CO_2R^7$, $-CONY^3Y^4$ or $-NY^3Y^4$, or the group $-NY^1Y^2$ may

form a 5-7 membered cyclic amine which (i) may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from alkoxy, carboxamido, carboxy, hydroxy, oxo (or a 5, 6,or 7 membered cyclic acetal derivative thereof), alkyl, aryl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyl, or heterocycloalkyl or alkyl substituted by carboxy, carboxamido or hydroxy (ii) may also contain a further heteroatom selected from O, S, SO_2 or NY^5 and (iii) may also be fused to additional aryl, heteroaryl, heterocycloalkyl or cycloalkyl rings to form a bicyclic or tricyclic ring system;

Y^3 and Y^4 are independently hydrogen, alkenyl, alkyl, alkynyl, aryl, arylalkyl, cycloalkyl, heteroaryl or heteroarylalkyl, or the group $-NY^3Y^4$ may form a 5-7 membered cyclic amine as defined for $-NY^1Y^2$ above;

Y^5 is hydrogen, alkyl, aryl, arylalkyl, $-C(=Z)R^{10}$, $-C(=Z)OR^{10}$ or $-SO_2R^{10}$;

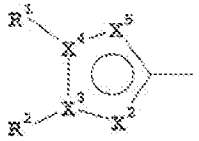
Z is an oxygen or sulphur atom;

m is zero or an integer 1 or 2; and

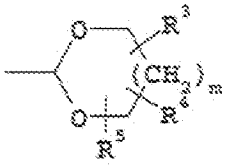
n is zero or an integer 1 or 2;

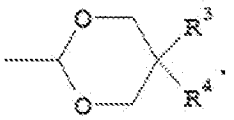
or and an N-oxide thereof, or and an ester prodrug thereof; or ~~and~~ a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, or ~~and~~ a hydrate of a compound of formula (I), or ~~and~~ an N-oxide thereof, and its ester prodrug.

2. (cancelled)

3. (previously presented) A compound according to Claim 1 in which Het is 

wherein X^2 and X^5 are independently CH, N, NH, O or S, and X^3 and X^4 independently are N or C, but excluding compounds in which one of X^2 and X^5 is N and the other is NH and X^3 and X^4 are both C.

4. (previously presented) A compound according Claim 1 in which the ring 

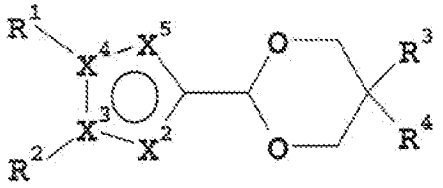
is 

5. (previously presented) A compound according to Claim 1 in which one of R^1 and R^2 is 4-pyridyl and the other is 4-fluorophenyl.

6. (cancelled)

7. (cancelled)

8. (currently amended) A compound according to Claim 1 having the formula(Ib)



(Ib)

in which R^3, R^4, X^2, X^3, X^4 and X^5 are as defined ~~defined~~ in Claim 1, one of R^1 and R^2 is 4-pyridyl and the other is 4-fluorophenyl, an N-oxide thereof, or and an ester prodrug thereof; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, or and a hydrate of a compound of formula (Ib) ~~(Ia)~~ or and an N-oxide thereof, and its ester prodrug.

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) A compound according to Claim 1 in which R^3 and R^4 are both C_{1-4}alkyl groups.

12. (previously presented) A compound according to Claim 1 in which R^3 is -C(=O)-NY^1Y^2 (where $Y^1$and Y^2 are as defined in Claim 1) and R^4 is C_{1-4}alkyl.

13. (previously presented) A compound according to Claim 12 in which Y^1 is hydrogen and Y^2 is alkyl or cycloalkyl.

14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to Claim 1 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient.

16-20 (cancelled)